

Final Performance Report to USDA

Agreement #12-25-G-0541

Pride of New York "Buy Local" Cooperative Advertising Program

FY2006 Specialty Crop Block Grant

Submitted by:

New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets

Project Title: Pride of New York "Buy Local" Cooperative Advertising Program

Project Summary:

New York's specialty crop producers are located within a day's drive of more than half the North American wealth, with New York City alone representing a \$30 billion/year market. To help New York's producers capture a greater portion of this valuable market and to help them take advantage of the ongoing "buy local" interest, the New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets (NYSDAM) created the Pride of New York "Buy Local" Cooperative Advertising Program. This cost-share pilot program offered the State's eligible specialty crop producers and processors the opportunity to initiate customized advertising and promotion activities, thereby increasing consumer awareness and sales of locally grown specialty crop products.

Project Approach:

This project utilized the resources and expertise of NYSDAM's Pride of New York marketing/branding program. Developed in 1996 to promote preference for and help consumers identify New York State food and agricultural products, the Pride of New York program serves to create synergies within the industry and develops cost-effective promotional opportunities for New York farmers, food processors, foodservice entities and retailers, with the ultimate goal of increasing local sales.

By building upon the outreach of past media-driven promotional efforts spearheaded by the Pride of New York, the approach of this project was to offer specialty crop businesses the ability to initiate or expand their advertising efforts in markets across the entire State, including new market areas that had not previously been targeted by the Pride of New York advertisements.

The pilot program was structured so that participating producers received cost-share funding (50/50 requirement) as well as assistance in developing marketing plans including television, radio and consumer print cooperative advertising.

The matching funds, up to \$5,000 per participant, were distributed on a first-come, first serve basis. The program was designed so that participants had the opportunity to develop advertisements and/or promotional materials on a customized basis, based on the producer's marketing plan, goals, and budget. Pride of New York offered participants pre-negotiated media packages as well as technical advice with the development of advertisements, scripts and/or promotional materials. The pre-negotiated packages were offered as follows:

Television– Cooperative television campaigns included a 30-second Pride of New York branding commercial run concurrently with Pride member 30-second cooperative commercials and supplemented with Public Service Announcements. Pride member commercials ended with a 7-second Pride tag.

Radio– Cooperative Pride of New York radio campaigns featured a 60-second Pride of New York spot in combination with billboard sponsorships and Public Service Announcements. Pride member cooperative 30-second spots ended with a 7-second Pride tag.

Print– Cooperative Pride of New York print ads were placed in a variety of consumer publications.

In order to ensure maximum market exposure and maintain program consistency and quality, advertisements and materials were reviewed and approved by Pride of New York staff.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved:

This project offered a valuable opportunity to initiate or expand advertising efforts for specialty crop producers and processors throughout the State. As a result of these SCBG funds:

- A total of **3,295 advertisements** were placed statewide (2,807 radio; 60 television; 428 print)
- A total of **225,671 customized point of sale/promotional materials** were created and have or will be distributed to consumers, including 129,000 brochures/rack cards; 45,930 postcards/business cards; 36,291 labels/product tags; 1,157 signs/banners/posters; 2,000 magnets; 1,000 pens; 2,000 bumper stickers; 2,000 business cards; and 6,902 bags/boxes.

Data gathered from NYSDAM indicates that **over one million consumers have been reached** as a result of these advertisements and promotional materials. (Note: Not all of the promotional materials have been distributed at the time this report was generated). According to the 24 producers who reported an increase in sales, the range of the increase was 3%- 100% (average increase 19.6%). An additional six producers reporting sales increases totaling approximately \$58,544.

Many of the grant recipients, when reporting the measurable outcomes from their projects, indicated that this program allowed them to conduct marketing efforts that they previously didn't have the financial means to do. Those producers that were already conducting some television and/or radio advertising were, as a result of this program, able to increase their media buys to penetrate the market on a more frequent basis. Yet others indicated that they were able to include additional specialty crops that they didn't have the means to advertise in the past. Numerous recipients were able to update their point of sale materials (brochures, rack cards, etc.), which they viewed as being highly beneficial for their long-term marketing plans.

Below is a sampling of some of the comments received from awardees regarding the impact this program had upon the competitiveness of their specialty crop businesses.

- *"The Pride of New York grant program has made it possible for us to introduce our market's New York grown fruits and vegetables to a new audience, and turn them into repeat visitors."* – Joe Fitzgerald, Kingston Farmers Market
- *"Many people commented that I didn't know you existed until I saw your brochure. Thank you so much for allowing us to participate in the project – it has been very beneficial."* – Orebed Sugar Shack
- *"Customer response has been very favorable. This was an excellent means of advertising that people constantly mentioned as having seen."*
--Mark Lagoner, Lagoner Farms
- *"Overall sales were up and in today's economy we were looking at a decrease in sales".* – Rhodes Greenhouse
- *"Receiving this grant allowed us to expand the number of radio spots we were able to run. We frequently asked our new customers how they heard about us. The radio spot was their #1 response."* – Mark and Lauren Van Buren, Zehr's Farm Market and Nursery, Inc.
- *"With the mass advertising that we were able to afford with this program, we saw many new customers".* – Charlene and Steve Button, Windy Hill Orchard & Farm Market
- *"We did hear from more people that said they had seen our ads this year, compared to other years. Running larger ads and running ads with color did increase our coverage."* – Paul Askew, Paul's Nursery
- *"Without these grant funds, the affordability would not have been possible for my growing business."* –Teri L. Ellis, North Croghan Outpost
- *"We feel this grant opportunity increased our brand awareness, legitimacy as a quality producer and customer traffic for our 2009 fall harvest season."* – Jay and Abigail Wilson, Maple Shade Farm
- *"Through radio advertising we were able to spread the word about all that we have to offer and we are now starting to develop a local reputation for quality New York maple products."* – Andy Hurlbut, Hurlbut's Maple Products
- *"The program was very successful for us. We would have never advertised if it were not for the program."* – Richard and Wendy Phillips, Evergreen Farm
- *"We were very pleased with the number of people that commented on hearing the ads..."* – Amanda C. Elemos, Central New York regional Authority
- *"We saw new faces at our market every week this summer and when asked how did they know about us they almost always said they 'saw it in the paper'".* – Michele McGlone, Canajoharie Farmers Market

Beneficiaries:

There were 153 applications received with enough funding to support 52 projects. The recipients are listed, by region, as follows:

WESTERN NEW YORK

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|---|---------|
| Abundance Cooperative Market (Monroe County) | \$3,215 |
| Badding Bros. Farm Market (Erie County)..... | \$4,239 |
| Becker Farms & Vizcarra Vineyards (Niagara County) | \$3,432 |
| Eden Valley Growers (Erie County) | \$ 500 |
| Gro-Moore Farms (Monroe County) | \$1,000 |
| Hidden Hollow Farms (Monroe County) | \$ 483 |
| Lagoner Farms (Wayne County) | \$1,146 |
| Murphy's Orchards (Niagara County) | \$1,270 |
| Niagara County Cornell Cooperative Extension (Niagara County) | \$ 509 |
| Zehr's Farm Market & Nursery (Niagara County) | \$5,000 |

FINGER LAKES

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|---|---------|
| Bakers' Acres (Tompkins County) | \$3,166 |
| Elderberry Pond Country Foods (Cayuga County) | \$2,674 |
| Goose Watch Winery (Seneca County) | \$2,427 |
| Penguin Bay Winery (Schuyler County) | \$2,171 |
| Swedish Hill Winery (Seneca County) | \$2,125 |
| Three Brothers Winery (Ontario County) | \$ 500 |
| Victory Hill Farm (Steuben County) | \$ 818 |

CENTRAL NEW YORK

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|---|---------|
| Alambria Cooperative Market (Madison County)..... | \$ 675 |
| Central New York Regional Market (Onondaga County)..... | \$4,000 |
| Chenango-Madison Bounty (Madison County) | \$3,743 |
| Delaney Farms (Onondaga County) | \$ 500 |
| Hunter & Hilsberg (Onondaga County) | \$2,500 |
| Navario Orchard (Onondaga County) | \$4,983 |
| Nelson Farms (Madison County) | \$2,194 |
| Paul's Nursery (Oswego County) | \$1,500 |
| Windy Hill Orchard (Oneida County)..... | \$1,465 |

SOUTHERN TIER

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|---|---------|
| Plantasia Nursery (Tioga County) | \$ 925 |
| Purdy & Son's Foods (Chenango County) | \$1,500 |

NORTH COUNTRY

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| Adirondack Maple Producers (Essex County) | \$1,000 |
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| Carthage Area Chamber of Commerce Farmers Market (Jefferson County) | \$ 269 |
| Hurlbut's Maple Products (St. Lawrence County) | \$2,463 |
| North Croghan Outpost (Jefferson County) | \$ 426 |
| Orebed Sugar Shack (St. Lawrence County) | \$ 481 |
| Rhodes Greenhouses (Jefferson County) | \$2,500 |
| St. Lawrence County Maple Association | \$ 785 |
| Thousand Islands Winery (Jefferson County) | \$4,966 |

MOHAWK VALLEY

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|---|---------|
| Canajoharie Farmers' Market (Montgomery County) | \$ 432 |
| Cooperstown Farmers' Market (Otsego County) | \$1,948 |
| Fly Creek Cider Mill (Otsego County) | \$5,000 |
| Maple Shade Farm (Delaware County) | \$1,000 |
| Pick-A-Pumpkin Patch (Schoharie County) | \$ 868 |

CAPITAL DISTRICT

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|--|---------|
| Ellms Family Farm (Saratoga County) | \$3,751 |
| Upper Hudson Maple Producers Association (Washington County) | \$1,350 |
| Zorbas Natural Food (Saratoga County) | \$ 300 |

HUDSON VALLEY

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|---|---------|
| Evergreen Farm (Dutchess County) | \$1,315 |
| Fishkill Farms (Dutchess County) | \$5,000 |
| Kingston Farmers' Market (Ulster County) | \$4,781 |
| Raspberry Fields Farm (Ulster County) | \$ 115 |
| Soons Orchard (Orange County) | \$5,000 |
| Suffern Farmers' Market (Rockland County) | \$2,200 |

NEW YORK CITY

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| Rick's Pick's LLC (New York County) | \$ 606 |
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STATEWIDE

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| New York State Maple Producers Association | \$4,500 |
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In addition to these individual success stories, this program also served to expand brand recognition for the Pride of New York, which is of benefit to its 3,200 members and the entire industry. Furthermore, many of the advertisements featured general information regarding the reasons to buy local as well as educating consumers about the State's specialty crops as they were in season. Although NYSDAM was not able to quantify the direct economic benefits to other specialty crop producers that did not directly receive grant funds, we believe through anecdotal evidence, that the consumer awareness that was raised and benefits of the "buy local" messages that were communicated had a positive impact on New York's overall specialty crop sales.

Lessons Learned:

Because this was the first attempt in expanding market coverage to the entire State, acquiring media bids and negotiating packages with a large number of stations in various markets took longer than anticipated. In particular, the relatively high costs and fragmentation of the radio market required Pride of New York staff to carefully assemble and reassemble packages with over 200 stations, while being cognizant and paying careful attention to producer's budgets and our ability to optimally reach targeted markets.

In addition, due to overall changes to the economy and the resultant substantial volatility in advertising markets that was encountered, media rates drastically dropped partway through the development of the program. As a result, in order to maximize the impact and cost effectiveness of the program for producers, NYSDAM's media consultant renegotiated bids and package options.

In the end, however, a small percentage of producers opted to use the media packages that were pre-negotiated by NYSDAM. This occurred primarily for two reasons. First, many producers already had established relationships with media within their respective regions and decided they would rather build upon those existing media relations as opposed to trying new options. Secondly, due to the economy, even with the cost-share funds many producers decided they simply could not afford to advertise via television or radio and opted to choose less costly options, such as point of sale signage, rack cards, promotional pamphlets, etc.

Although the delivery methods differed than originally anticipated, the results of the program and beneficial impact clearly showed the value of this program's cooperative approach and overall value to the industry and consumers.

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Project Title: Education and Promotion of the Availability of New York's Specialty Crops

Project Summary:

This project has and continues to expand consumer awareness of harvest times, availability, and nutritional benefits of New York's diverse produce. The "Pride from A(pples) to Z(ucchini)" harvest chart and the "Produce Trading Cards" are two of the most popular resources the New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets (NYSDAM) has developed in recent years. This project allowed distribution of the chart and the trading cards to be expanded to Spanish speaking residents, which had never been done before. Additionally, this project produced large promotional posters of the chart that are being strategically placed at farmers markets, school cafeterias and other key consumer locations throughout the State.

Project Approach:

According to the 2004 American Community Survey from the [United States Census Bureau](#), there are over 3 million Spanish speaking people residing in New York State. This constitutes 15.96% of the State's population and represents a significant market for a wide range of the State's locally produced specialty crops, particularly in concentrated urban locations. There are approximately 500 farmers markets statewide (120 in New York City alone) that are visited by literally hundreds of thousands of consumers annually. This project allowed expansion of consumer outreach and education of New York specialty crops to new market areas and ethnic groups throughout the State.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved:

As a result of this project, approximately 40,000 Produce Trading Cards, 40,000 New York State Harvest Charts and 400 posters in total will be distributed at farmers markets, schools, community events, etc. (Note: Not all of the promotional materials have been distributed at the time this report was generated).

Beneficiaries:

This project benefited a wide range of consumers throughout the State, but particularly targeted Spanish speaking, urban residents, and young consumers. Although NYSDAM was not able to quantify the direct economic benefits to the State's specialty crop producers, we believe that the heightened consumer awareness of the availability of fresh, local produce will have a positive impact on New York's specialty crop sales.

Additionally, we believe the benefits of consuming healthy produce communicated to children in this fun and educational way will influence eating and purchasing behaviors for many years to come.

Lessons Learned:

NYSDAM will continue to track the use of these materials and may produce additional copies, depending on budgetary allowances. Due to their popularity among school-aged children and the industry, a second set of Produce Trading Cards, featuring nine new specialty crops, are currently being developed.

These new cards will be used by food service directors, parents, teachers, school administrators and others during New York Harvest for New York Kids Week and throughout the year to help schools and communities learn about New York agriculture, enjoy locally-grown foods, and inspire healthy food choices.

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